STATEMENT ABOUT THE WAR.

DEWAN PRESIDENT: [Order, order. I have deemed it essential that, meeting as this House does at a critical juncture in the world's affairs, this opportunity should be taken by me to inform my fellow-members of this Assembly, of the steps which have been taken in the present situation, of the steps which are necessary and of the work that is expected from all of us at this crisis. There can be no doubt that the present moment is epoch-making and the latest news is by no means re-assuring. Honourable members of this House must be aware of the fall of Paris, a city justly known as the *Wille de lumiere*, the city of light, a city which was the centre of the world's culture and refinement. Paris has fallen, and the French Ministry resigned last night and a military Government has taken its place and is contemplating a very serious step. Now, at this juncture it is hardly to be doubted that we are in many ways at the parting of ways so far as the history of the world is concerned and there are many persons who think that this is a testing time for humanity. Perhaps a new order is in the throes of coming to birth when a re-ordering of the world's life and the world's philosophy may be the final product of this terrible conflict. In this conflict and at this time what is needed is determined leadership and also conjoint work on the part of everybody to achieve the end, which is the attainment, at any cost or loss, of harmony and peace and the placing of the world on the basis of mutual comradeship without the enthronement of stark force as the guiding factor. In other words, what is taking place to day both in the combatant countries and in those up to now outside the ambit and the range of belligerency, is a world-wide conscription, not merely conscription in the narrow ordinary sense of a conscription of military forces, but a conscription of all resources, of industries, of labour, and it may be added also a conscription of the moral and the spiritual forces of humanity. Let us remember what is being done elsewhere. This morning's papers brought the news that far off Australia, farther away in some senses than India from the centre of conflict, has placed all industry and all property at the disposal of the State for the purpose of winning through and achieving the common aim.

We may now ask ourselves what the place of India is and of Travancore in particular, and I shall confine myself to a large extent to this State. In some senses, the crisis is much nearer India and this State than many people are aware. After all, the Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia are not far off Aden, and Aden is not far off from India. But I am not an alarmist. I do not believe that the actual physical conflict is near to us as some people affect to think Nevertheless, we are in essence in the vortex of this struggle and at any moment the stroke may fall and it is up to us to devise ways and means for the purpose of waging this struggle when and if it arises, to deal with the struggle and surmount the obstacles with which we shall be confronted.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Dewan-President.

Now in this connection it may not be out of place for me to refer to the remarkable pronouncement made by Mr. Amery quite recently. "The test of a country's readiness is the power to make great decisions, and it is for Indian leaders to-day to show that power now". This is a call to which we cannot but respond. He has added that in certain contingencies India may easily become the central point of the Empire's defence. This aspect cannot be ignored. His Excellency the Viceroy has made a fervent appeal. He has made an appeal in regard to the formation of Civic Guards and volunteer committees. He has made an appeal for the purpose of actively promoting the war savings movement and he has made an appeal for what may be called the re-organisation and the regimentation of effort, both financial and political. What Travancore has done is a matter which I cannot divulge fully. Travancore has contributed already as probably its first instalment the sum of Rs. 6 lakhs in cash. It has taken upon itself to carry out voluntarily certain contracts for materials which are essential for war. In this connection it is my painful duty to point out that, oblivious of the responsibility resting upon newspapers and public men and traders also, there has been found in this State a newspaper "Powra Prabha" which has published a warning that no person should now sell cocoanut shells or charcoal but should hold them up in order to get the best possible price. Another newspaper "Powra Dhwani" has also published an article almost to the same effect. The article in the "Powra Prabha" calls upon its readers and the public to hold up the shells because prices are bound to go up. I may at once say that the newspapers of that type and men of that type are trying to hinder war work. The utmost possible strictness will be exercised by the Government for the purpose of frustrating what may be called, the mischievous efforts of such persons. But generally speaking, the utmost possible co-operation has been forthcoming from all over the State in regard to such efforts as Government and agencies employed by Government have had to take for the purpose of war efforts. There are other directions in which Travancore desires to play a part and while at the present moment, I am not in a position to divulge the details I hope not many days will lapse before those details will become known. But this I can say, that surely both on land and sea the efforts of the Travancore Government to help in the prosecution of the war have been and will be substantial. The only reason why I do not go into the details at this moment is, it must be obvious to honourable members of this House, that if information of a certain type is made available it might be used by persons who might require it for sinister purposes. But as soon as it is wise and expedient to give those details they will be given.

Having said this, is it too much to emphasise that every one in this State will and should be anxious to demonstrate his readiness in all possible ways to do his bit? That can only be done by steadfast work and by instantaneous and spontaneous co-operation and by a readiness

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

to put the self second and the country and its future first. I therefore appeal to my fellow-members of this House and ask the representatives of the people at large and through them the people of Travancore that they should follow the example of our beloved Maharaja in making available all resources of money, of material, of labour, of work, of thought, of courage and of prayer in this critical juncture. I know that this part of the country is not as rich as some other parts of India. This is a land of the upper middle class and the lower middle class and the very circumstance that we are to-day going to consider the Debt Relief Bill shows that the economic status of this country is not stabilised or quite satisfactory. But nevertheless, in all these matters it is not the amount of contributions that tells. It is not the sum total that matters. It is the spirit of the offering and the dedication that are crucial and fundamental and in that spirit and in that dedication I have no doubt that the people of Travancore will yield to none elsewhere.

At the risk of being misunderstood and not with a view merely to point the finger of scorn or to make any censure, let me say that this is a time when one great leader has chosen to state with reference to a particular political organisation that that organisation cannot take part in any war measure such as those suggested by His Excellency the Viceroy nor can it become a party to the proposed Civic Guards and it is further stated that unless India is recognised as an independent country with all its natural consequences no steps should be taken for the purpose of helping England. At this time also a great man has said that unless one particular political party is regarded as the sole representative of India, no solution will be forthcoming. Such examples have been followed by other political groups. My point is that Travancore will and must decline to participate in any such doubts or any such attitude. But on the other hand, the part that Travancore will play is that of one, who whatever his difference may be with another party to a controversy, realises that a period of difficulty, a period of crisis, is not a period to give this kind of half-hearted and illusory sympathy. I feel sure of this State's attitude. Otherwise I should not have made this appeal to the Legislature and through the Legislature to the country at large. The first thing that has to be done is, as I ventured to point out elsewhere, to arouse by constant work and exhortation the feeling in the Government of this country and in the people of this country that a land which cannot defend itself is not a country worth living in, that a country which will not take part in all those activities which make for manliness and self-reliance and vigour of thought and action is not a country worth fighting for. Let me repeat that independence or dominion status or any other political boon given to-day, given under conditions which make it impossible, if we know the fate of the countries outside India to retain such a gift an' implement it adequately, will only be a source of humiliation and shame to those who accept the gift. India should and will be recognised if she will and can be made fit to defend herself as a major partner in the British commonwealth of nations. This will not be a gift but a realisation. It will not come otherwise. In order

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Dewan-President.]

to achieve this end every one in this country should show preparedness, not in un-Indian dreams and metaphysical subtleties, but in the practical philosophies of the work-a-day practical world and it is hoped that public opinion will be aroused, that public opinion will make itself vocal, that it will exact and demand that India has a right and a prerogative as well as a duty to defend herself, to defend those ideals for which India has stood throughout the ages and which the world has forgotten and which have been characteristic of Indian life and endeavour throughout the ages.

In these circumstances what shall we do in practice? The first thing that has to be done is to see to it that all those small voluntary organisations which communal bodies or other units, political and otherwise, have started must be put aside for the moment. There must be State-wide volunteering for work, for pioneer work, for defence work, for police work. Why do I insist on that? As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I do not believe that what may be called the actual proximity of war need be apprehended at least for some time. But I do think that there may be many subversive elements in this country—indeed I know there are—and just beyond this country and beyond this State which are only waiting for an opportunity to create trouble. The recent arrest of a noted communist leader has brought to light the ramifications of a wide-spread conspiracy which it is not possible to make public now, but it would be made public later. The associations and affiliations of the communist organisation, the funds which are collected for that organisation, the men who are intermingled with that organisation and who have clandestinely given many kinds of help to it-they are not only those who are immature or misled but people who ought to know better, people who ore, some of them, in Government or quasi-Government service—all these things will come to light. India is not fortunately near the war zone. But India cannot afford to be weakened. This State cannot afford to be weakened by the insidious invasions of these socialistic and communistic doctrinaires who, without any idea of tranquillity, without any advertence to India's tradition and history, are out to create conflict for conflict's sake, conflagration for conflagration's sake and civil disturbance for its own sake. A time may come when it is up to the citizens of the country to defend themselves and their country. For that purpose, and if the call comes, I hope that young men and old, without distinction of age or community, will rally round His Highness to make it possible for us to release our military forces, to release our Armed Reserve Force, to release if necessary even the ordinary Police force for urgent and important work elsewhere. Therefore when His Highness asks for a Civic Guard as His Excellency the Viceroy has asked I trust that the response will be immediate, profund and striking. Then there is the necessity, not reckoning what may be called the actual amount, to raise funds to help all these great movements devoted

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

to the relief of the afflicted, wounded, and distressed all over the theatre of war. At present the Red Cross Society is doing wonderful work in this direction. There are institutions like the War Savings Funds, and new forms of investments, some bearing interest and some not bearing interest. All people can and should contribute their mite towards these organisations. I make an appeal that there should be no reluctance or half-heartedness shown in that matter.

It has recently come to the notice of Government that in certain places the British Post Office Savings Banks and to a much lesser extent, the Anchal Savings Banks, have experienced a run. I may say at once that there is not the slightest danger for necessity for mistrust in that matter because the financial and monetary position of India is perhaps at this moment not far below that of the United States of America which is the strongest in the world in this respect. And it may be seen, even in spite of the news that we are getting, that the gilt-edged securities are not fluctuating violently as they were on other occasions. At this juncture, in my humble opinion, it would be an act of treachery to withdraw the savings without adequate need. My fellow-members of the Legislature may recollect that England is to-day paying 100 per cent excess profit duty. It is paying something like 20 per cent income tax and in some cases nearly 75 per cent as super tax. The Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights and those fundamentals of British constitution of which we used to read so much in political text books are in essence non-existent. Now, no man's property is his but it is the State's. No man's person is his, but it is the State's. No man's resources are his, but they are the State's. That is the spirit in which England is working. We have not come to that position in our affairs. But it is in that spirit that we have to work. Therefore I call on the people of this State both from motives of prudence and on other and higher grounds not to be remiss in this matter. Now let us look at the prudential side of this matter. Suppose they withdraw all the money from these Savings Banks. Where are they to place the money? Are they to bury the money underground? This would be very dangerous if inquisitive and necessitous neighbours know something about it.

Advice is always welcome but sometimes mischievous. We find that a newspaper the other day suggested that the Coir Factories must be immediately assumed by the Government. It suggested further that Government must produce the coir and give work to all labourers who are now disbanded. I may assure my fellow-members of the Legislature that I am fully aware of the distress of the coir workers at this juncture. And nobody is more alive to their needs than myself. I may tell you that many steps have been taken, and some successfully, for the purpose of stimulating the purchase of coir twine and coir yarn by the velligerent countries. A deputation will proceed from this State to make some attempts in this direction which I trust will not be infructuous. Let us see who are the persons who have been buying coir mats. They are the lower middle class people and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Dewan-President.]

upper middle class of England, France, Holland and Denmark. Where are they now? They cannot afford now to buy any furniture. The people of these countries are flying from place to place for dear life. The whole trade is dislocated. The Government are aware of the gravity of the problem of unemployment of four to five thousand coir workers. We must get a good market for the sale of coir mats. That problem is under consideration and it is not an helpful solution to say that the Government should assume the management of those factories. If it is made possible for the factories to work for all the twenty-four hours and the labourers worked in many shifts where can we sell the productions? I trust the members of the public and the journals, when commenting on these matters, will bear the practical side of their exhortations also in their mind.

Then about labour situation. Here I am uttering a word of advice and also a word of warning. It is in the locality in and around Alleppey that we find that the roots of subversive organisations to which I have alluded earlier in the course of my remarks are strongest. The motive of these organisations is to undermine the existing state of our society and bring about the annihilation of capital and property as such. In other words, they follow the Marxist or the communist theory. But the holding of that opinion as a practical doctrine is a matter fraught with the greatest evil to the future of the country. I trust that labour will not play into the hands of such designing people who are hirelings. We know that they are hirelings. I hope that labour will realise that the Government's attempts will be to see that labour does not suffer, that it gets adequate wages, that if the particular industries in which it is engaged are not able to function, alternative modes of labour will be forthcoming and at any cost and sacrifice Government will see to it that the labouring population are not reduced to starvation.

Now with regard to the price control. We made attempts at some sacrifice to effect a control of prices. That attempt would have been more fruitful and beneficial if it had been widespread throughout the country. If was only in Travancore and in one or two other places that this was tried. We have lost money over that; but it was well spent because it prevented the sudden soaring up of prices. It is our hope that it may not be necessary for us to resort to such price control over again. There again it is for the people to realise that they have a right and a duty, a duty by their fellow-creatures and a right to get only what may be called the legitimate fruits of their agricultural or other work. Government hope that they will not be put to the necessity of resorting to stringent measures of price control which however will become inevitable if there is any profiteering projected or carried on.

I have done. I appeal to my fellow-members and through them to the world outside Travancore that propaganda for the purpose of releasing our might and our valour and our manliness, for the purpose of fighting to defend our country, is the first essential. The second essential is readiness at the risk of all discomfort and trouble to regiment our resources so that we might stand behind the serried ranks of

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

those who are fighting against great odds and in the face of overwhelming obstacles, in the face of a philosophy of force fighting for those imponderable things which make for happiness, for that sweetness and that light without which the world will be a dreary place to live. It is for us to pursue the philosophy of self-reliance and not of defeatism or day-dreaming. India never stood for peace as part of defeatism. India stood for peace, a peace with strength. It is that peace with strength which stands almost in danger of disappearance from the world. It is that cause for which great masses of men are fighting today against great odds. It is that cause on which we shall have to concentrate. If is that cause which will prosper. But it will not prosper unless India puts her shoulder to the wheel India, after all, has meant a great deal in the past and there is now an opportunity for the renaissance of India. Personally I believe that if the world is in this plight at the present moment it is because the world has forgotten the lessons that India taught to the world ages ago. India can and should teach those lessons again. But to do so she must be powerful and mighty. Out of her strength will come victory; out of victory peace, and from peace will emerge sweetness and light.

MR. KAINIKKARA M. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Changanachery* cum *Peermade*): Sir, you have placed before us very many points of vast and deep importance. But I wish to speak only on one topic namely what you have said about the past that has to be played by the people of the country. Sir, I may assure you, that I am voicing the opinion of not only the members of this House, but also the opinion of every one of the citizens of this country, when I say that the people of this country stand cent. per cent. behind His Highness the Maharaja in the spirit with which His Highness has promised all possible help to the British Empire. The people of the country, as you said, are not rich. We have got our own difficulties. But of one thing we are proud: There has been no occasion in the history of this country when the people have failed the Royal Family in a crisis like this. We assure you, Sir, that all the resources of thetpeople will be gladly placed at the command of the Government and we request you, Sir, to place this our humble promise at the sacred feet of His Highness the Maharaja.

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE.

MR. S. SUNDARARAJAN: Sir, under Rule 76 of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I beg to lay on the table the following statement of expenditure authorised by the Government under Section 32 of Act II of 1108.

	Demand.	Amount in Rupees.	Particulars.
III.	16. Administration of Justice—E. Law Officers' Department	8,000	For payment of fees to Vakils in connection with the prosecution of the Travancore National and Quilon Bank case.
III.	Do. Conciliation Offices	16,713	For the continuance of the Conciliation Boards till 1-12-1115.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly